



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

NED LAMONT
GOVERNOR

NANCY NAVARRETTA MA, LPC, NCC
COMMISSIONER

Testimony by Nancy Navarretta, Commissioner
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
For the Public Safety and Security Committee

Senator Gaston, Representative Boyd, and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, I am Commissioner Nancy Navarretta of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony related to SB 972 AN ACT CONCERNING CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINING FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN POLICE OFFICERS AND SOCIAL WORKERS.

DMHAS is a healthcare agency statutorily mandated to provide mental health and substance use treatment and recovery services for adults, aged eighteen and older. DMHAS works closely with first responders, including police, to ensure individuals with behavioral health disorders, who are experiencing a crisis, receive appropriate assistance.

To ensure appropriate emergency assistance, DMHAS operates and funds 18 mobile emergency crisis teams that are readily accessible, offer rapid response, and short term services for individuals and families experiencing an episode of mental health or substance use crises. Mobile Crisis Teams partner with family members and loved ones, peer-run and recovery community organizations, faith-based communities, law enforcement, and other civic and community organizations to ensure that persons in distress and their loved ones have support and are connected to resources within their local community.

DMHAS supports and recognizes the value of law enforcement training which prepares officers to appropriately respond to individuals experiencing a mental health and/or substance use crisis. DMHAS feels strongly that there is a need to maintain the quality, consistency and integrity of best-practice police training. For many years, DMHAS has successfully contracted with the Connecticut Alliance to Benefit Law Enforcement, Inc. (CABLE) to provide training to law enforcement on the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) model. The CIT model is a nationally recognized best practice designed to support a collaborative and integrative approach to crisis response. The training prepares law enforcement with ways to recognize a behavioral health crisis and to intervene in a way that is sensitive to individuals experiencing distressing symptomology. Providing resources, connection to behavioral health providers, and diversion from hospitalization, arrest and/or incarceration is most often a preferred outcome. CIT training

also promotes a response which prioritizes the safety of all - the persons in crisis, the community, and the police officers who respond to crisis calls.

CABLE provides eleven (11) 40-hour CIT trainings each year with a capacity for each training to have approximately 50 attendees. To-date, DMHAS has funded over 100 CIT trainings attended by over 5,000 people including state, municipal, hospital, and university police officers, mental health professionals, correctional officers, probation officers, and EMS. Ninety-six percent of municipal police departments (88 out of 91) now have CIT trained officers and 65 police departments have CIT policies. CABLE also supports and offers consultation to police departments in the development of their CIT policies. All of the colleges and universities in Connecticut, as well as DMHAS and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection have CIT trained police officers.

SB 972 Section 2 is unnecessary as this work is already implemented and funded by DMHAS.

Please contact Mary Kate Mason, DMHAS Legislative Affairs at Mary.Mason@ct.gov for additional information on DMHAS programs and their collaborative relationships with law enforcement or if you would like to discuss further. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.